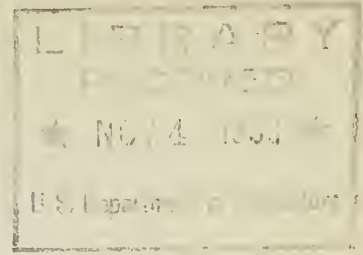


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INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS

United States Department of Agriculture



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WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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BREAKFAST CEREALS

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Morning, to some poetically minded persons, is the time of day when there may be an eye-filling sunrise or a dew-pearled hillside on view. To a majority of others, however, morning is more prosaically associated with the insistent jangle of an alarm clock.

And every morning brings to the woman who looks after the diet of the family a challenging problem. Briefly, this problem is to serve a breakfast that is both adequate and tempting, and to see to it that the family takes time to eat it.

An adequate breakfast, according to nutritionists, is one that satisfies the appetite at the time it is eaten and "stays by" the eater until lunch time. For an adult who is up early and has a light lunch, breakfast should furnish from one-fourth to one-third of the day's food needs. For children, it usually is best to divide the food requirements of the day fairly evenly among three meals.

Mainstay of most adequate breakfasts is a cereal dish. Because these satisfy the appetite and supply energy at a low cost, dietitians advise the family meal-planner with a limited food budget to serve at least one, sometimes more cereal dishes a day, in addition to bread at every meal. Moreover, if there's only enough money to buy the minimum of fruits and vegetables, at least half of



the cereals should be the whole-grain kind rather than refined -- because whole-grain cereals furnish some vitamins and minerals. For children, they advise a morning cereal of the cooked variety, preferably one that contains the germ part and some of the branny layers of the grain.

Aside from these exceptions, there need be no limitations on the kind of breakfast cereal. And wise cooks striving for variety can find hundreds of different ways to present bland cereal products.

Classic among cereal dishes is simple porridge -- made most often from rolled oats, whole or refined wheat, corn meal or hominy grits. For the kinds that have no preliminary cooking in the process of their manufacture, long, slow cooking in a double boiler is the best way to develop the good flavor. For those that come to the kitchen partially cooked, the package ordinarily gives dependable directions.

The amount of water needed to cook a given amount of cereal varies considerably. Rolled oats, for instance, need about twice as much water as cereal usually. Granular cereals will absorb from five to six times their measure of water during cooking, while it takes about two quarts or eight times as much water as cereal to boil one cup of rice. For variety, and to add food value, part of the liquid may be milk, added after the cereal has partly cooked in the water.

Standard amount of salt to use in cooked cereals is about 1 teaspoon to every quart of water. This may vary, naturally, according to taste but it should never be left out, because it brings out the starch flavor.

Chief difficulty in making porridge with the granular cereals is that they are likely to lump. One way to prevent this is to add the water cold to the cereal and to mix the two thoroughly before heating. A quicker way is to add the cereal slowly to the boiling water, stirring until all is blended in.

When cereal is cooked ahead of time and reheated to serve, refrain from stirring it until it is well-heated. Otherwise, lumps of the cooked cereal are likely to form. Pouring two or three teaspoons of water over cooked cereal left to stand will prevent a hard crust from forming over the top.

Even when porridge is served morning after morning, it need not be monotonous. One day it may be plain -- with milk and sugar if desired. Another morning, add fresh or stewed dried fruits. Raisins, chopped figs or dates, or fresh fruits in season also lend interest. Southerners speak highly of hominy grits with bacon.

Cooks who want to take the cereal a step further, mold it and then slice and brown it in a little fat, and serve this with sirup or preserves. A special favorite is corn-meal mush. Vary this by adding well-flavored cheese to the mush just before taking it off the fire to cool.

Streamlined modern breakfast foods are ready-cooked cereals served plain or with fruit. To these, many a homemaker adds her own stamp, by putting them in the oven to get warm and crisp before they go on the table.

Red-letter occasions in many busy households are the mornings that the breakfast cereal comes to the tables in waffles or griddle cakes. Cooks who serve these often may get variety by using whole-wheat flour instead of the white flour called for in most recipes. Or they may use part white flour, part corn meal, or all corn meal, or buckwheat. Substitute either corn meal, whole-wheat flour, or buckwheat, measure for measure for white flour.

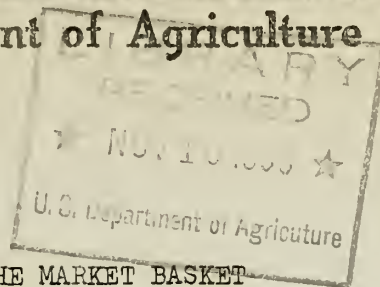
Besides these adaptable dishes there are biscuits -- muffins -- rolls -- corn bread, which also lend themselves to certain variations. And for those who prefer their cereal in the form of toast, this may be served plain buttered, buttered with cinnamon and sugar, or dipped in egg and fried for French toast.

With all these possibilities the breakfast cereal should never need to be the same two days in a row -- unless the family puts in a special request for a repeat performance.

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WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

FRUIT DESSERTS

To most children, a cook is as good as the desserts she produces. Not that children won't do justice to well-cooked food of any kind. But dishes such as "Mom's pies", or her shortcakes, or her puddings are the ones that they boast about to their companions and ask for particularly.

Grown-ups, too, reserve special critical judgment for desserts. And, whether they say so or not, most of them are disappointed if the meal ends without one -- or if the dessert turns out to be something commonplace.

Both from the nutritional angle and from the standpoint of tempting flavor and attractiveness, some of the best material for desserts is fruit. Everyone in the family, say dietitians, might well have five or more servings of vegetables and fruit every day -- because of the minerals, vitamins, and bulk that these foods contribute to the diet. One of these five servings could be a fruit for breakfast; another could be a fruit dessert at lunch or dinner.

Fruit desserts may vary with the tastes of the family and change with the calendar. Some, of course, such as fruit sauces, are standard from January to December. But for the most part, the more filling ones -- puddings, pies, dumplings, hot stewed fruits, and similar dishes -- are more popular now that the weather is cooler. Now, too, with fewer fresh fruits available, homemakers are using more of the canned, dried, and frozen kinds.

No cook can go wrong making sauce from fresh fruits if she remembers to be sparing with the water, adds sugar at the right time, and puts in a dash of salt to bring out the flavor of the fruit. Cook the fruit until it is soft. And to fruits such as apples, which are a large percent water, add only enough water in cooking to keep the fruit from scorching.

Add sugar to taste. Because usually it is not necessary to preserve the shape of the fruit in a sauce, the best time to add sugar is during the last few minutes of cooking.

Fruit compote is something else again. For in this the fruit must hold its shape throughout the cooking. So when making a pear compote, for instance, put the pears in fairly dilute sugar sirup at the very beginning. Then the sugar in the sirup will harden the fruit somewhat and help it to hold its shape.

For pear compote, cook pared, cored fruit in a sirup made from equal parts of sugar and water with a bit of salt. When the pears are tender enough to pierce with a straw, take them from the sirup, chill them, and serve with whipped cream. Or dispense with the chilling and serve them at once -- hot, filled with tart jelly, and topped with a spoonful of hard sauce, grated coconut, or chopped nuts. For a colorful fruit dessert put red cinnamon candies in the sirup before cooking the fruit.

Two good baking fruits are pears and apples. Pears are cooked in a moderate oven, apples in a hot one. Wash pears, cut them in half, and core them. Put them in a baking dish, sprinkle with sugar, a little salt, and dot with butter. Add very little water and bake until soft. Remove the lid, then cook a little longer to let the sirup cook down. Serve hot or cold, with or without cream or other garnish.

Dried fruits, like fresh ones, are served most often as sauce. And aside from the preliminary soaking, their preparation is much the same. Always wash



fruits in hot water before soaking them. Then use the soaking water to cook the fruit, in order to get all of the good flavor.

Most dried apricots need no soaking. Put them directly into boiling water and simmer for 30 minutes. Start figs in cold water, simmer them 20 to 30 minutes. Dried peaches are best if soaked in cold water for half an hour, then cooked from 15 to 20 minutes. And prunes generally are best dropped in boiling water, left there for an hour to become plump, then simmered for half an hour until they are tender. Raisins, which go into any number of things, may be plumped up by putting them in a small amount of water, then bring them just to the boiling point.

Either fresh or dried fruits are good in steamed puddings made with a butter cake foundation. These puddings are something like the well-known plum puddings but not quite so rich -- and can be made in less time. Dried apricots and cranberries are excellent in such a pudding, because they are tart enough to flavor the cake mixture. Chop the apricots; leave the cranberries whole. Roll whichever one is used in flour, and add at the very last.

Fruits that have been canned have been cooked in the process. So they generally are best in dishes that may be prepared with little or no cooking. For tapioca puddings, gelatin desserts, certain pastries, and numerous uncooked desserts -- they are made-to-order.

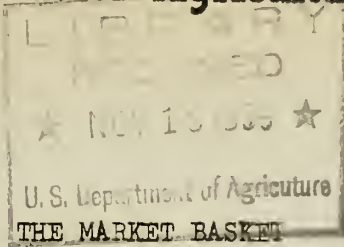
Fresh or canned fruits that go well together may be combined into fruit cups, which make ideal desserts to top off a heavy meal. And for a simple luncheon menu -- a fruit salad, served with salty crackers and cheese, may double as both salad and dessert.

Summer -- winter -- spring or fall -- a final course of fruit served with no preparation but a thorough washing is always welcome. This lends variety. And for fruits such as oranges and grapes, any fancy fixing is superfluous. Moreover, providing such a dessert takes little of the homemaker's time. She has merely to consult her purse, then pick and choose from the year-round procession of fresh fruits as they come to market. Most in evidence now are pears, apples, oranges, grapes, and bananas.

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WASHINGTON, D. C.

by
Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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ROAST TURKEY AND SAVORY STUFFING
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If an artist wanted to do a still-life picture symbolic of Thanksgiving he might paint the main course of a turkey dinner. There could be slices of roast turkey -- some light, some dark -- arranged over savory stuffing, with bright cranberry sauce for a splash of color.

For the combination of turkey or other roast poultry, plus stuffing, plus cranberries, is part of the Thanksgiving tradition. And the wise cook distinguishes herself on this holiday -- not by serving dishes that are different -- but by cooking these conventional favorites well, seasoning them as tastily as she knows how.

Good news for those who choose turkey as the festive bird this year is the estimate of the 1939 turkey crop made recently by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. It's the largest crop in turkey history -- probably over 15 percent larger than that of 1936, which up to now was the record year.

Also of interest to those who choose turkey for their dinner may be some of the following buying, stuffing, roasting, and carving suggestions.

How big a turkey to buy is no problem if the cook does a little multiplication before she goes to market. Allow $3/4$ to 1 pound turkey for each person. That is turkey, weighed as it is usually sold in retail markets, picked but not drawn with head and feet still on.

It may not be possible to buy the best turkey on the market, but knowing the earmarks of turkey quality will help in getting the most for whatever there is to spend. Some of these earmarks are a well-rounded body, a well-fleshed breast, a good coating of fat under the skin, few blemishes, and a few pinfeathers. If the turkey is to go direct to table from over, it is important that it have a good shape, so that it will look well on the table, with no deformities such as a very crooked breast to interfere with carving.

Preliminaries no cook can afford to slight are the details of getting the turkey ready to stuff. She plucks out pinfeathers carefully and singes off the hairs. She scrubs the bird outside, rinses it, and wipes it dry both inside and out. She never, of course, lets turkey or any other poultry soak in water to lose flavor and food value. Then she cuts the neckbone off short, without removing the skin around it, and removes the oil sac at the base of the tail. With this routine work out of the way, the turkey is ready for savory stuffing.

Although there are stuffings and stuffings, by far the most common are those with a bread-crumbs base. Good proportions for such a stuffing are one pint or more of mixed celery, parsley, onion, and any other seasoning desired, $3/4$ cup of butter or other good-flavored fat, to every quart of bread crumbs.

Best crumbs for a "dry" type of stuffing are made from bread 2 to 3 days old. Cut loaves in half and "fork" out the insides. Then pick the pieces apart with the fingertips until all the crumbs are evenly fine in size. Do not use the crust in the stuffing, because it makes hard brown lumps.

Ordinarily, a one-pound loaf of bread makes about one quart of bread crumbs. In planning the amount of stuffing needed for a turkey, figure from the weight of the bird as brought. Then for every pound of turkey allow one cup of bread crumbs minus two. For instance, a turkey that weighed 14 pounds market weight would require about 12 cups or 3 quarts of crumbs.

Sauté the seasonings in the fat, then add the crumbs. Let all get piping hot. Sprinkle the inside of the turkey with salt and fill the body cavity and the loose skin around the neck with this stuffing. Putting the stuffing in hot speeds up the cooking and improves the flavor. Put the stuffing in lightly without packing it, because it will expand during the roasting.

In three brief sentences, the method for roasting plump young turkeys is: Keep the oven temperature moderate all the time the turkey is roasting. Use an open pan with a rack. Add no water.

With pan drippings, melted butter, or other fat baste the turkey at regular intervals, turning it each time. Start turkey breast down, then turn it from side to side and occasionally on its back. Baste and turn small or medium-sized turkeys every half hour. Turn larger turkeys, cooked in a slower oven, about every hour.

Following is a table giving time and temperature for turkeys in four different weight groups. These figures have been arrived at after the roasting of hundreds of experimental turkeys in kitchens of the Federal Bureau of Home Economics.

For a small turkey, 6 to 9 pounds, allow from 2-1/2 to 3 hours in an oven about 325° F. For 10-13 pound turkeys, allow 3 to 4 hours in an oven 300° F. For 14 to 17 pound turkeys, allow 4-1/2 to 5-1/2 hours in an oven 275° F. And for the giants, turkeys 18 to 25 pounds, keep the oven from 250° to 275° F. for 6 to 8 hours. When the turkey is tender in breast and thigh, and the juice does not show a red tinge the turkey is ready to carve.

From here on, if the bird comes to the table in one piece, the cook has no jurisdiction over the turkey. She can help the carver, however, by putting the turkey on a platter that is large enough to allow a zone of safety all around the edge. She can hold the garnish to a few well-placed springs of parsley. She can set the table so that water glasses are a safe distance from the carving knife;

give the carver space to operate in other words. She can provide a two-tined carving fork and an extra plate for the pieces of meat as the carver removes them from the bird. Men who take pride in their carving will see to it themselves that the knife is razor sharp.

Stance of the carver may be sitting or standing, whichever is most convenient. Some men prefer to stand. The carver also has a choice of the position in which the turkey is set before him. If he has trouble approaching the bird when it is placed broadside with legs toward the right--he may find it easier to work with a bird that is set so that its legs point directly towards him.

Few men have trouble cutting off the leg of the turkey, slicing the dark meat from it. But the Waterloo of many a carver comes when he tries to take off the wing. According to one expert, a good way to overcome this is to remember that the ball and socket joint of the wing is usually farther toward the center of the bird than he thinks. Place the knife about an inch above where the wing joins the body and cut toward the center at an angle of about 45 degrees.

With the wing off, there is a long clean sweep of breast ready to be sliced. For this operation keep the two-tined fork astride the breastbone as it is for removing the wing. Then with the left hand holding the turkey steady, slice the breast with a slightly sawing motion down and away from the carver. Remove the slices to a plate with the carving knife.

For "seconds" or if one side of the turkey isn't enough to serve the guests around once, carve the other side of the turkey in the same order. Time to begin serving the plates with a spoonful of stuffing, a portion of white, and a slice of dark meat is as soon as the first piece of breast is ready.

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THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

PEARS IN THE WINTER FRUIT BOWL

Familiar centerpiece for the dining room table or the sideboard not so many years ago was an unchanging arrangement of fruit in a bowl -- usually apples, pears, bananas, and oranges. But for exhibition purposes only was this fruit, as many a person learned by trying to eat one of the wax models.

Today, the fruit bowl still lends a decorative note to dining rooms and kitchens. But no longer is it there purely as "art for art's sake". Since fresh fruit had supplanted imitation, the family frequently finishes off a meal by eating part of the centerpiece. Consequently, the contents of the bowl change from day to day -- and from season to season.

Well-qualified for a position in the fall or winter fruit bowl are the late varieties of pears. Prices for these pears have been low so far this season. And it seems probable that supplies of them available for domestic consumption will be as large as they were last year, when pear production in the United States reached an all-time high. Exports, for which a good share of the winter and fall pears are produced in this country, have fallen off considerably since the beginning of the European War. England and other European countries, ordinarily the best customers for our late pears, consider this fruit a special delicacy.

Center of the commercial winter pear production in the United States is located in the three far-western States -- California, Oregon, and Washington. There, since about 1920, the industry has been expanding.

Classified as fall and winter pears are those varieties that are harvested after the Bartlett, and that will keep in storage for a considerable time. All are picked when they are mature but still quite hard and green, then they are stored at carefully regulated temperatures. Before they can be eaten these must go through a ripening or a "conditioning" period.

Gradually, fall and winter pears are gaining prestige in this country, as those who direct the fruit along the line from tree to consumer improve their methods of handling this kind of pear. A winter pear that has been harvested at the right time, properly stored and ripened, and eaten in the normal season of the variety to which it belongs is mellow, very juicy, aromatic, and has an appealing flavor.

Unfortunately, however, the winter pear hides its good qualities beneath a too-modest, not to say unpromising, exterior. Some have rough skins and a generally mottled appearance. Some look greenish even when they are fully ripe. Therefore the first thing the buyer must establish in her mind as she goes shopping for winter pears is that it is not a good idea to judge by looks alone.

Another helpful thing to keep in mind is the time of year when the four main winter pear varieties are in season.

The Bosc, like all late pears, is good for eating fresh. But it gets special mention because it is so good for baking. When it is ready to eat it is yellow with cinnamon brown markings. This is a large pear with a long tapering neck. It's season is from September 1 to December 15.

Among connoisseurs, Comice -- in season from November 1 to late January -- is famous for its eating quality. This is also a large pear but with no neck. When ripe, it has a smooth, creamy or pale yellow skin. The flesh is fine grained and has a characteristic sweet perfumed flavor.

Good for all-round use and one that keeps well is the Anjou -- in season from November 1, through April. This is also a large pear, has a smooth creamy yellow skin when it is ripe, with a spicy flavor.

From the first of December to the last of May, the Winter Nelis, another good all-purpose pear, comes to market. This is a small pear. When ripe, it is green and yellow with various amounts of russetting that give it a mottled appearance.

On markets where pears are sold in large quantities, the retailer often ripens pears in special conditioning rooms as he takes them out of storage. On such markets it is possible to buy either pears that are slightly underripe for cooking -- or to get those that are fully ripe for eating fresh immediately.

Usually, however, the homemaker has to oversee part or all of the ripening process herself. Knowing this, many pear growers are now putting directions on the wrapper surrounding each pear.

Way to ripen pears at home is to let them stand at ordinary living or dining room temperature until they become slightly soft at the stem end, give gently to the pressure of the fingers, are fragrant and somewhat lighter in color. This may take from 4 to 5 days.

One of the best things about the late varieties of pears is that they come to market at a time of year when fresh fruit is not so plentiful. All are particularly good served uncooked -- cut up in crescent shapes for salads, cubed

to put in fruit cups. In either, pears are best when in the company of acid, bright-colored fruit that serves to set off their bland flavor, give contrast to their pale color. Another good taste comrade for the pear is a sharp-flavored cheese, a sprinkling of lemon juice, or some tart mayonnaise. Also, acid fruit or fruit juice and the acid mayonnaise keeps the pear from turning black as it stands.

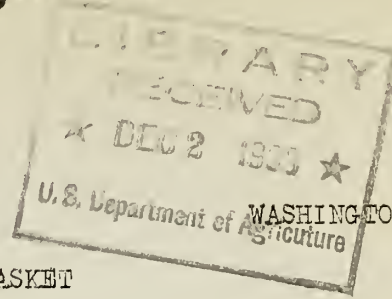
Of the various ways of cooking pears, baking is one of the easiest and most adaptable. Pears may be baked either peeled and cored, or whole. They are best for baking slightly underripe. For variety use brown sugar and honey for sweetening with a bit of cinnamon. Or serve the baked pears hot with cream cheese. Or stud the pears before baking with whole cloves, to make spiced pears.

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THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

VITAMIN A, AN INDISPENSABLE DIET ITEM

Sentence by sentence, and chapter by chapter — the story of vitamin A has been unfolding for the past thirty years. And although scientists cannot yet read the complete story of this vitamin in their research literature, they have gone far enough to be sure that it is one of the indispensable items in the diets of human beings.

Anyone who has ever recited the alphabet of vitamins knows that "A" stands for the vitamin that prevents xerophthalmia, a serious eye disease. If a person continues for a long period of time on a diet lacking in vitamin A the result is total and permanent blindness.

Fortunately, cases of xerophthalmia are rare in this country.

But vitamin A has other functions to perform than the preventing of xerophthalmia. It is necessary for good nutrition at all ages. It helps to promote normal growth. Children who do not get enough vitamin A when their teeth are forming may have defective teeth. Anyone who continues to get less vitamin A than he needs will experience bad effects sooner or later, although there may not be any startling symptoms immediately.



One of the first signs of vitamin-A deficiency is nutritional night blindness. A night blind person will not be able to adjust his eyes to dim light as well as he should. He will have more than ordinary difficulty, for example, in finding his way in a dimly lighted theater.

Not all that we are finding out about vitamins today, however, has to do with what results when any given vitamin "isn't there" in the diet. On the positive side, much has been done to find how much people need and the efficient sources of vitamin A among common foods. Nutritionists point out that diets often can be improved upon -- not by spending more money -- but by a wiser choice.

In food, there are at least five different sources of vitamin A. There is vitamin A itself, which occurs in certain animal foods. And there are four yellow pigments, which occur both in animal and in plant foods. These pigments can be changed in the body to vitamin A.

Richest natural sources of vitamin A are livers of various animals, especially those of certain kinds of fish. There are substantial amounts in whole milk and cream, butter, egg yolks, cheese made from whole milk or cream -- especially if these foods are used in the quantities recommended for good nutrition in general. Oily fish, such as herring and salmon, also contribute to the vitamin-A needs. Shellfish, such as oysters and clams, also provide vitamin A.

In the vegetable kingdom, green and yellow are often the sign of the carotenes, pigments transformed into vitamin A in the body. Green, leafy vegetables and yellow vegetables are excellent sources. Some of the common ones are kale, spinach, escarole, dandelion greens, watercress, turnip greens, and lamb-quarters. In leafy head vegetables, such as cabbage and lettuce -- the greener they are the richer in vitamin A. Outer green leaves are much richer than the bleached inner leaves. Other good vegetable sources are yellow carrots, yellow-fleshed sweetpotatoes, and ripe tomatoes. Yellow-fleshed fruits, such as apricots and peaches are also good sources.

How much vitamin A a person needs at any one age seems to depend at least in part upon his weight. That is, larger persons need more than those built to a smaller scale. Children need more than adults. And pregnant or nursing women need more than other adults.

Helpful to the meal planner may be the following statement made recently by Dr. Lela E. Booher, chief of the Division of Foods and Nutrition of the Federal Bureau of Home Economics.

"For children between the ages of 2 and 14 years a liberal amount of vitamin A will be provided if their daily food contains about 1 quart of whole milk in addition to an egg (or egg yolk), servings of green leafy vegetables and of butter suited to the size of the child, and a teaspoonful of cod-liver oil or its equivalent in other fish-liver oils.

"The vitamin A requirements of a normal adult can be supplied by a daily allowance of a pint of whole milk, one egg, two ordinary sized pats of butter, and an average serving of a leafy green or a yellow vegetable. It is not necessary to include exactly these articles of food, since many other foods rated as excellent sources of vitamin A will contribute comparable amounts of this vitamin.

No vitamin story would be complete that failed to mention what happens to vitamin content between the time that food is produced and its appearance on the family table. For all practical purposes, vitamin A may be considered fairly stable. True, if green vegetables are held at ordinary temperatures there is a gradual loss of vitamin A. Freezing and low storage temperatures cause practically no loss. But the drying process may destroy part of the vitamin A content in some types of food.

In general, rapid cooking and the usual home and commercial canning method do not materially injure vitamin A.

